

than in my judgment you can properly do in the light of existing conditions.

Many desirable services, richly deserved by our people, must be postponed for the duration of the war. For some time past, I have been keenly interested in an expansion of our health program among our school children. Since this Assembly convened, I have had several conferences with Dr. Reynolds, the Secretary of our State Board of Health, and he advises me that the shortage of personnel due to war conditions materially handicaps the expansion of this worthwhile and much needed program. However, some expansion of our school children's health program will be made and much good accomplished,—but the full fruition of such program must await the final cessation of war and the return of more normal conditions. In like manner, much of the proposals of the Hospital and Medical Care Commission must be postponed to some future date.

But Senators and Lady and Gentlemen of the House, a most comprehensive plan of hospitalization and medical care has been laid before you and is contained in the report now on your desks. The bill before you and now under consideration endorses the principles and partially effectuates the plan outlined in such report. I personally favor and sincerely believe that improvement in medical care in North Carolina is sure to come and that it is definitely on the way. Just when the capstone will be finally laid for a comprehensive and adequate plan of medical care in North Carolina is a matter for future legislators,—but we here today and in the succeeding days of this General Assembly, ought to lay the cornerstone and the broad foundation upon which we can build such a program as our people seek to obtain and ought to have.

The people of our State at decisive times in our history have made the great decision to build a more enlightened and productive State. In our poverty we built a great school system; in spite of debts and deficits we built a great public highway system. In these days, we shall not be afraid to lay the foundations for proper medical and hospital care needed by our poorer and less fortunate fellow citizens. The voices of the sick, the suffering and even the dying cry out to us at this time for help. These voices which we hear, and voices too long unheard, come to us across the plains and hills of every part of our State. It is my belief that we should answer their calls and minister to their needs by laying the foundation of a balanced and humane program for more adequate medical care for the people of this Commonwealth.

As members of this General Assembly, you have the responsibility and privilege of making another decisive decision in the history of our State. I ask you to believe with me that better schools, better roads and better health constitute the three main high roads for the advancement of North Carolina. I have confidence that you, in this hour of destiny, will make the decision embracing a program for the future happiness and welfare of North Carolina.